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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000365

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STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
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STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
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WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2017
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [EAID](#) [HA](#) [KCRM](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#)
SUBJECT: CITE SOLEIL: GANGS SCURRY FOR COVER

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 297

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Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) Summary: MINUSTAH is continuing operations in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Cite Soleil. Recent successes include the arrest of 17 suspected gang members, the take-over of a major base of operations for gang leader Amaral Duclonat, and the arrest of an Evans deputy named "Ti Bazil". MINUSTAH has also made progress initiating community projects in the neighborhood. The most notorious gang members, though not yet in custody, have been hiding and unable to operate, so MINUSTAH considers their latest operations a success. MINUSTAH officials insist that they will continue operations until they have complete control of Cite Soleil. End Summary.

17 Arrested in Amaral's Stronghold

12. (C) On February 20, MINUSTAH coordinated with the Haitian National Police to arrest 17 suspected gang members in the Belecourt neighborhood of Cite Soleil, and took control of gang leader Amaral's base of operations. MINUSTAH troops took no fire during the operation which MINUSTAH refers to as "Operation Nazca". MINUSTAH Civil Affairs deputy Lizbeth Cullity (strictly protect) referred to this operation as "very successful".

Key Evans Deputy Arrested

13. (U) On February 18, MINUSTAH arrested prominent Cite Soleil gang leader and Evans deputy, Johnny Pierre Louis, known as "Ti Bazil," in the Brooklyn area of the Port-au-Prince slum. MINUSTAH believes Ti Bazil is responsible for numerous murders and other violent crimes, including the killings of two families of participants in the GoH's disarmament program (DDR).

Old Gang Base Becomes Clinic

14. (U) MINUSTAH has turned the old headquarters of Evans known as Base Jamaica, into a clinic and distribution point for aid. The building, located in Cite Soleil's Boston neighborhood, was taken over by MINUSTAH earlier in February (ref A). Brazilian doctors and dentists are using the building to offer free consultations to Cite Soleil residents. UN troops are using the building to distribute soup and water. The transformation is part of MINUSTAH's plan to turn former gang bases into community centers.

Why Not the "Big 3"?

15. (C) Many in Port-au-Prince have expressed anxiety over MINUSTAH's failure, thus far, to capture any of the three most notorious gang leaders - Evans, Amaral and Belony. MINUSTAH's intelligence unit (JMAC) deputy, Mike Center (strictly protect), told Poloff that the intent of their operations - to remove the gang leaders' ability to operate - is often misunderstood by the public. He asserted that by taking control of the gangs' bases of operations, they have the leaders on the run and unable to carry out kidnapping and other crimes. By Center's definition, the inability, to date, to capture the gang leaders is not a failure. Center stated that gang activity has been minimal in other slums like Martissant in recent days and he hoped that the operations in Cite Soleil had sent a signal to gangs throughout Port-au-Prince that "playtime is over."

Complete Control Within Reach

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16. (C) According to Cullity, MINUSTAH's goal is complete control of the Cite Soleil neighborhood. Troops are now positioned in Cite Soleil 24 hours a day, and operations will continue until their goal is accomplished. Now that the military has successfully entered the most dangerous neighborhoods, MINUSTAH is starting to turn to targeted police operations to find and arrest gang members. Locating targeted individuals is not an easy task in the maze-like streets of Cite Soleil, which is why MINUSTAH is relying more and more on their police and intelligence divisions to accomplish their goals. Cullity also stated that "everyone" at MINUSTAH knows they would have more success capturing the major gang leaders if they offered cash rewards, but this is outside their authority. "Overall," she said "the arrests are adding up and MINUSTAH is very close to having complete control of the neighborhood."

17. (C) Comment: The Ambassador on February 21 and February 22 had contrasting meetings with President Preval and Prime Minister Alexis. Preval complained that MINUSTAH's lack of success in capturing the gang leaders constituted failure of their operations, and brooked no argument that MINUSTAH had made progress otherwise. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, was optimistic that Cite Soleil would soon be under MINUSTAH and GOH control and was anxious to coordinate a full-scale development effort on the ground. While we withhold judgement regarding how soon Cite Soleil will be completely safe for development workers, we share MINUSTAH's and the Prime Minister's optimism and find Preval's attitude overly petulant. End Comment.
SANDERSON